

NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS HEALTH CARE • 2011 & 2012 WINNER OF BEST NAVY BLOG

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Navy Medicine News](#) | [Navy Medicine WebSite](#)

Written on NOVEMBER 27, 2013 AT 2:47 PM by VKREMER

'Tis the Season to ... Use Alcohol Responsibly

Filed under [FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY](#), [HEATH](#), [PUBLIC HEALTH](#)

[NO COMMENTS]

By Cmdr. Michail Charissis, psychiatrist, [U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery](#)



The start of the holiday season is just around the corner! The weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day can be a nonstop whirl of celebrations with co-workers, family and friends. For those who choose to consume alcohol, many of these occasions offer the opportunity for a drink. So what's important for us to know about alcohol and its effects on our bodies and lives? Let's look at some facts about alcohol use.

How much can I drink and be OK?

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) and the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#) define *moderate drinking* as one drink per day for women, two drinks per day for men. NIAAA defines *heavy* or *at-risk alcohol use* as more than three drinks per day or more than seven drinks per week for women, and more than four drinks per day or 14 drinks per week for men. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) defines heavy drinking as more than one drink per day for women and more than 2 drinks per day for men.

Strictly speaking, there is no 'safe' level of alcohol use. Research indicates that alcohol use can cause many negative health effects for men and women. These negative effects range from the loss of relationships and income to sexual assault to depression and suicide. For women, research indicates that women who drink between two and five drinks per day have a 41% increased incidence of breast cancer.

There are also several groups of people who should not drink alcohol at all:


Navy Medicine Video


Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

Navy Medicine Social Media

 Follow us on Twitter

 Join us on Facebook

 Read our publications

 View our photo stream

 Watch our videos

Navy Medicine Live Archives

[February 2015 \(10\)](#)

[January 2015 \(12\)](#)

[December 2014 \(17\)](#)

[November 2014 \(11\)](#)

- Women who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or nursing
- People who have medical conditions or who are taking medications that will interact negatively with alcohol
- People recovering from an alcohol addiction
- Anyone who is planning to drive
- Anyone under age 21

Just how many drinks are in my drink?

A beer, a glass of wine, and a cocktail: are they all the same?

Appearances can be deceiving. What is considered a ‘standard drink’ in the United States is 0.6 ounces of 100% alcohol. This is the amount of alcohol that’s found in:

- 12 ounces of beer, or
- 5 ounces of wine, or
- 1.5 ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits

So what does this mean when your friend mixes you that perfect martini, your Aunt Betty fills your wineglass to the brim, or you pour yourself a beer in that super-sized Oktoberfest mug you bought last year? It may be just ‘one drink,’ but you may be consuming much more than just one standard serving. And if you have another, the number of alcohol servings you ultimately end up consuming can add up very quickly, and may be higher than you expected.

What could go wrong?

Alcohol consumption can cause short and long-term health effects, as well as other social and legal problems, including:

- Altered judgment
- Driving Under the Influence
- Loss of relationships, child neglect or abuse, and loss of child custody
- Unintentional injuries, including those from motor vehicle accidents
- Physical, sexual, domestic or other forms of violence (*either as a victim or a perpetrator*)
- Risky sexual behaviors, including an increased risk of sexual assault or sexually transmitted infections
- Cancers of the breast, liver, rectum, mouth, throat, and esophagus
- Alcohol poisoning
- Depression and suicide

What’s the bottom line?

October 2014 (15)
September 2014 (20)
August 2014 (14)
July 2014 (13)
June 2014 (8)
May 2014 (11)
April 2014 (9)
March 2014 (14)
February 2014 (7)
January 2014 (7)
December 2013 (7)
November 2013 (12)
October 2013 (7)
September 2013 (14)
August 2013 (13)
July 2013 (11)
June 2013 (22)
May 2013 (15)
April 2013 (14)
March 2013 (14)
February 2013 (14)
January 2013 (12)
December 2012 (11)
November 2012 (11)
October 2012 (7)
September 2012 (9)
August 2012 (12)
July 2012 (13)
June 2012 (17)
May 2012 (22)
April 2012 (14)
March 2012 (13)
February 2012 (14)
January 2012 (13)
December 2011 (13)
November 2011 (20)
October 2011 (22)
September 2011 (12)
August 2011 (16)

As a benchmark, a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) reading of 0.04 percent is established in the law as the limit for determining readiness to safely operate non-recreational, private and commercial vessels and aircraft. In the Navy, any service member whose hand-held Alcohol Detection Device (ADD) reading is .04 percent BAC or greater is considered not ready to safely perform duties and may be referred to the command drug and alcohol program adviser. Details of the ADD program and Navy standards are contained in [OPNAVINST 5350.8](#).

If you choose to drink alcohol during the holiday season (or any other time of year), make sure you know exactly how much you're drinking, keep your consumption to moderate levels, and make sure you can get home safely. And spread the word! Educate your shipmates, friends, and family about responsible alcohol use.

[← Next post](#)[Previous post →](#)

vkremer tagged this post with: [alcohol responsibility](#), [blood alcohol concentration](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#), [Navy](#), [Navy Medicine](#), [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

Read 221 articles by [vkremer](#)

